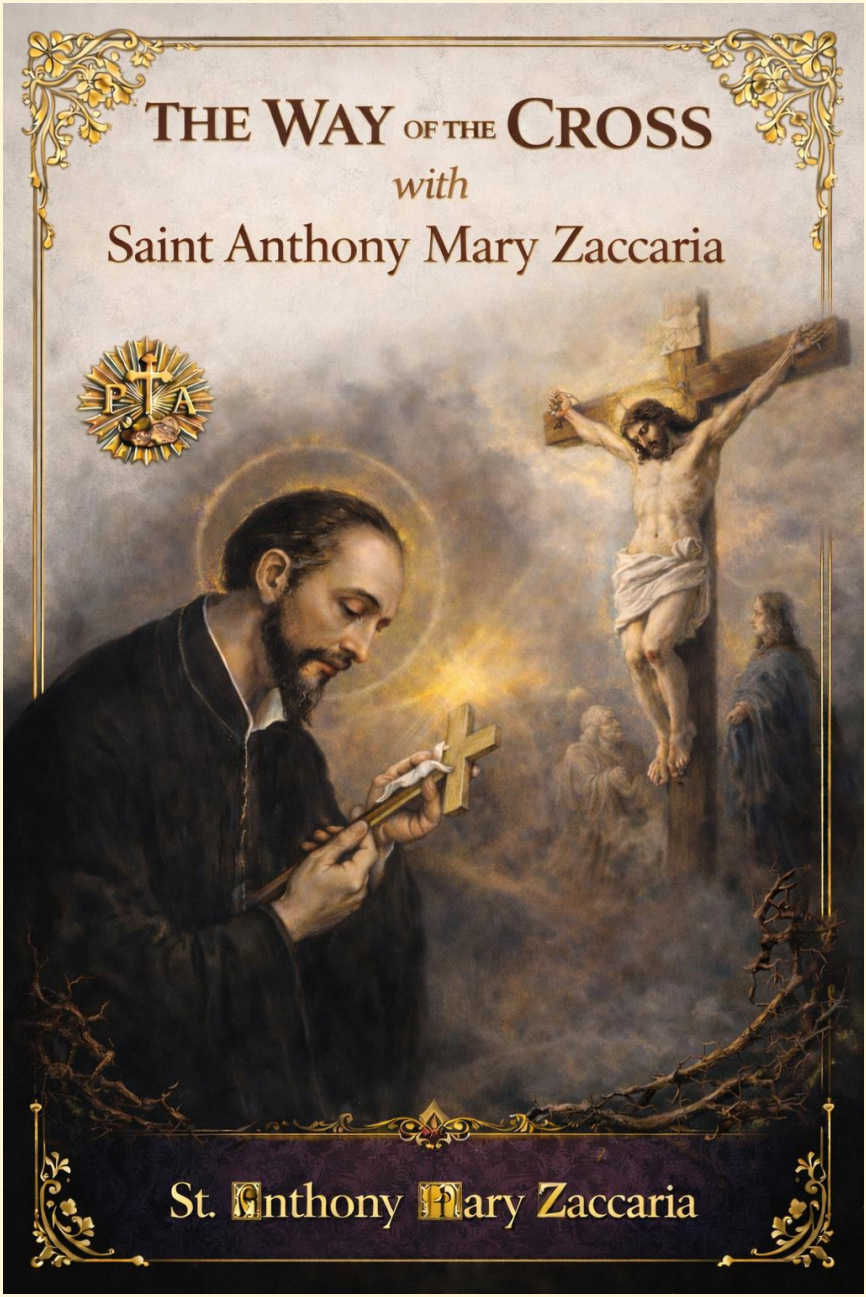
THE WAY OF THE CROSS

with

Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria



St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria

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Introduction to the Way of the Cross according to Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria

There is a path that does not so much pass through the stony streets of Jerusalem as through the interior of the human person. It is a way that begins where illusions of strength come to an end: in the place of stripping, silence, and truth. Here, the Cross is not a symbol or a metaphor. It is a reality that pierces the heart and places it before a love that cannot be understood except by passing through fire.

Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria seeks no shortcuts. He does not proclaim consolations without conversion, nor grace without truth. His word — marked by the spirit of Saint Paul — penetrates like a sword: it unmasks lukewarmness, shatters illusions, and calls one back to a full, radical life, entirely rooted in the Crucified Christ. His spirituality is a fire that purifies. It is a school of the Cross, where love is expressed not in words, but in the acceptance of sacrifice.

Each station of this journey is a moment of revelation: a painful mirror in which the truth of one's life is reflected. The silence of the Condemned One, the

weight of the cross, the falls, the gaze of the Mother, the cry of abandonment — all this ceases to be a story from centuries past and becomes a question for today: is there in me a willingness to love as He loved? Am I willing to let God burn away what is lukewarm, unstable, and comfortable?

This is not a path for the eyes, but for the heart. For a heart that desires to be transformed, even if this costs greatly. The Cross does not come to destroy. It comes to tear down what is false and to save what is eternal.

May this journey become prayer.

May it become decision. May it become response.

STATIONS OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS

STATION I
Jesus is condemned to death

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"But Jesus made no further answer." *(Mk 15:5)*
"He accepted every offense as the most precious jewel sent from heaven." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus accepts the sentence of death in silence and humility. Though innocent, He does not protest against injustice: He loves humiliation, knowing that the Father will transform it into our salvation. Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria teaches that insults and offenses endured for love become a precious treasure for the soul. Following Christ, we learn to accept wrongs and humiliations without rebellion, transforming them into an offering to God. Let us ask the Crucified One for the grace to give thanks for every experience that teaches us humility and unites us to His humiliated love.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION II
Jesus takes up His Cross

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"Whoever wishes to come after me must take up his cross daily and follow me." *(Lk 9:23)*
"Religion is a continual cross… and God commands us to take up our cross each day." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus takes the cross upon His shoulders with love. Though weighed down by our sins, He does not refuse it: He shows us that the way of faith passes through carrying the cross each day. Saint Anthony Mary reminds us that the whole life of Christ's disciples must be permeated by love for the Cross. Every renunciation, hardship, and suffering offered to God becomes a path of sanctification and a source of grace. Teach us, Lord, to carry our daily crosses with gratitude and dedication, remembering that we follow You, crucified and risen.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION III
Jesus falls the first time

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"Surely he has borne our sufferings." (Is 53:4)
"From sins committed and good neglected arises a deep awareness of one's own misery; from this conviction flows the truest humility." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus' first fall beneath the Cross reveals His total self-emptying: the God-man embraces human weakness. He falls upon the earth He Himself created, to raise us from the falls of sin. Saint Anthony Mary observes that awareness of one's own misery can become a blessing if it gives rise to true humility. Each of our falls can teach us a greater trust in God's mercy rather than in our own strength. Lord Jesus, grant that in moments of falling I may not give way to despair, but rise again trusting in Your forgiveness and finding strength in the Cross.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION IV
Jesus meets His Mother

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"And you yourself a sword will pierce." (Lk 2:35)
"By carrying and feeding constantly on crosses, we bear fruit: yours and ours." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

On the way to Calvary, Jesus meets His Mother. Their eyes, filled with sorrow but also with love, meet in silence. Mary shares in the suffering of her Son, carrying the Cross in her heart. In the spirituality of Saint Anthony Mary, suffering accepted in faith becomes fruitful: by nourishing ourselves on the Cross, we bear spiritual fruit. The love of Mary and Jesus, united in sorrow, produces the fruit of Redemption for the whole world. Sorrowful Mother, teach us to remain beside those who suffer with love and to transform our pain into good for others.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION V

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"They compelled a certain Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross." (Lk 23:26)
"Do you want to become holy, dearest one?... feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked... in all things let love move you." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross, at first by force. Yet this simple act becomes for him a source of grace. Saint Anthony Mary recalls the works of mercy, teaching that love for neighbor gives meaning to our actions and sanctifies us. When we lovingly help a brother or sister carry their cross, it is Jesus Himself who receives our help. Lord, give us eyes full of compassion and a heart ready to support those who walk beside us on the way of the Cross.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION VI

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." *(Mt 25:40)*
"...a great example of noble and profound love for Jesus Crucified..." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus with a cloth: a courageous gesture of compassion and pure love toward the suffering Savior. In return, she receives a precious gift: the image of Christ's face impressed upon the cloth and, above all, upon her heart. Saint Anthony Mary points to the example of the saints, burning with love for the Crucified One: it is this love that gives us the courage to perform works of mercy without fear. Even the smallest act of love has great value in God's eyes. Jesus, teach me to love You in suffering, brothers and sisters, and never to be ashamed of the mercy that reveals Your face to the world.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION VII

Jesus falls the second time

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"The righteous falls seven times and rises again." *(Prv 24:16)*
"Let us not refuse to share in their sufferings, bearing trials far lighter than those they endured." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus' second fall shows how suffering weakens a person. Yet Christ rises and continues on His way. Saint Anthony Mary exhorts us not to shrink from the trials that God permits: in truth, they are lighter than those borne by Jesus and His saints. When we fall again beneath the weight of the cross, let us remember that we are not alone: Christ walks with us and gives us the strength to rise. Lord, grant us the grace to accept with patience and courage the difficulties that return, trusting that every trial lived in faithfulness draws us closer to You.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION VIII

Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"Do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children." (Lk 23:28)
"You are inwardly converted to God, dearest one, when you meditate on your sins or on God's benefits... when in your soul you consider His graces and your faults." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus, meeting the women who are weeping, says: "Do not weep for me, but for yourselves and for your children." He invites them to an authentic conversion of heart. Saint Anthony Mary teaches that the true return to God is born from reflection on one's sins and on the graces received. Jesus desires that we weep more for our sins than for His suffering, because He suffers precisely because of our sins. Lord, grant us sincere repentance and a grateful remembrance of Your goodness, so that our tears may be transformed into the joy of forgiveness.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION IX

Jesus falls the third time

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"Let us run with perseverance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus." *(Heb 12:1–2)*

"Do not be dismayed by your miseries, but draw from them a motive for greater fervor." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

The third fall is the hardest: Jesus, almost exhausted, lies beneath the Cross. But love for the Father and for each one of us gives Him the strength to rise again. His perseverance teaches us that, even if we fall many times, we are called to rise and continue on the path toward holiness. Saint Paul, so beloved by Saint Anthony Mary, urges us not to stop, but to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. He is our guide and the fulfillment of our faith. Lord, grant that I may not lose hope on my journey, but continue to follow You with perseverance despite my weaknesses.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION X

Jesus is stripped of His garments

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"They divided his garments by casting lots." *(Jn 19:24)*
"...they have left us such a great example of noble and profound love for Jesus Crucified, of love for their own sufferings and humiliations..." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus is stripped of His garments before the crowd: He endures the most extreme humiliation. Deprived of everything outward, He nevertheless shines with His inner holiness and His love. Saint Anthony Mary points to the saints who loved their sufferings and humiliations for Christ. The believer accepts even shame and poverty, trusting that true dignity comes from God. Jesus, free us from attachment to the opinion of others and to material goods; teach us to humble ourselves out of love, so that with all our heart we may cling to You, Crucified One.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION XI

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"They crucified Him, and with Him two others." (Jn 19:18)
"Carry the Cross… persevere in prayer, devote your time to the service of your neighbor, nail yourself to holy Obedience and never depart from it." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus allows Himself to be nailed to the Cross: He willingly accepts the nails that immobilize His body. This apparent powerlessness is in fact the summit of obedience to the Father and of love for humanity. Saint Anthony Mary invites us to "nail ourselves" to holy obedience, remaining faithful to God's will. When suffering immobilizes us like nails, we can offer that time to God and to our brothers and sisters through prayer and sacrifice. Crucified Christ, teach me to remain faithful to Your will even in pain, to bear the fruits of salvation with You.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION XII
Jesus dies on the Cross

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." *(Lk 23:34)*
"Love your friends in Him and love your enemies for Him. Whoever does this will be pure, gentle, and free from every anxiety." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

Jesus, dying on the Cross, prays for His executioners: "Father, forgive them." He dies out of love for friends and enemies alike, giving His life for all. Saint Anthony Mary reminds us that the true disciples of Christ love their friends in God and their enemies for God. Beneath the Cross there are few friends and many who hate Him, yet Jesus desires the salvation of all. Lord, grant our hearts a love that knows how to forgive. Make us capable of loving even those who wound us, so that we may become pure and free through the power of Your offering.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION XIII

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"Joseph took the body of Jesus." *(Mk 15:46)*
"He will give you a constant spirit of self-forgetfulness amid the misery of the Cross." (Anthony M. Zaccaria)

The lifeless body of Jesus is placed in His Mother's arms. Mary presses her Son to her heart: sorrow reaches its peak, yet she does not rebel, faithfully cooperating in God's plan. The disciples take Jesus down from the Cross with love and reverence. Saint Anthony Mary speaks of the spirit of self-forgetfulness in the hardships of the Cross: in such moments, Christ is the only thing that matters. Mary and the disciples forget their own pain out of love for the Lord. Jesus, grant us this same disposition, so that in suffering we may not close in on ourselves, but offer ourselves to You and to our brothers and sisters, just as You offered Yourself for us.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.

STATION XIV

Jesus is laid in the tomb

— We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
— Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

"They laid Him in a tomb cut in the rock." *(Lk 23:53)*
"Where He is, there you shall be also: in this life, in the homeland of heaven; and in the next, enjoying glory."
(Anthony M. Zaccaria)

The body of Jesus rests in the tomb. Outwardly, it seems to be the end of the journey: silence and darkness envelop the world. But precisely in this silence victory is ripening: God is preparing the glory of the Resurrection. Saint Anthony Mary assures us that whoever remains united to Jesus will be where He is: first in the suffering of the Cross, then in the glory of heaven. The Way of the Cross does not end with death, but with life. Lord Jesus, we thank You because through the tomb You lead us to the triumph of the Resurrection. Grant us perseverance with You until the end, so that we may rejoice with You in eternal glory.

Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Lord may be impressed upon my heart.